

Letters to the church in...



Corinth

Focus: 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

Lesson 21-The Eye of Faith Gazes above the Darkness

- **The Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to go forth in Clarity and Power, not by any sort of deception from false teachers (v.1-5)**
 - (v.2) **"...not handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth...in the sight of God"**. The sinful things had been renounced. They labored always to speak the truth to every man's conscience "...[as] in the sight of God." **The Devil on the other hand always works deceitfully in regard to the word of God—and deceitful men walk in his footsteps** (See 2 Peter 3:15-17; Matthew 4:5-7, the Devil attempted to twist and mishandle the word of God, but Jesus met the false application by the clear and more obvious teaching of all Scripture in its proper context...which commends itself to our minds even more).
 - (v.4) "god of this world..." –A reference to the Devil who claims to have taken over this world for the time. (Though he's not entirely free here. He is limited by God).
 - (v.4) **The Devil wants our minds to be "blinded" to the truth.** He attempts to do so by introducing false teachings which contradict the clear word of Scripture. If he can make those teachings popular, misuse some scriptures out of context to support it, and assert that it is true, then he can deceive many—as he did to many of the Jews in the days of Christ so that they would not readily receive Jesus as the Messiah/Savior. **By blinding the eyes of religious leaders, Satan was able to more effectively destroy and blind many people. (See Matthew 15:12-14).** And, never forget, **you CANNOT determine if something is the truth or not based on the majority vote** (See Matthew 7:13-15). We must evaluate by the clear word of God (Isaiah 8:20).
 - (v.5) No selfish interests or self-serving is to be in the proclamation of the gospel. "We preach Christ" (not ourselves)...and we are "your servants."
- **The Glorious light of Jesus Christ shines out into this darkened world, bringing true enlightenment to all who will receive him (v.6,7).**
 - (v.6) first of all He shined in our hearts! Jesus is the "light of the world." *This gospel story is pictured in Genesis too. (Genesis 1:1-5)—Our hearts are sinful and darkened by this wicked and wretched world of sin. Formless and void—empty (without God). The Spirit of God moves upon us as well. "waters" representing peoples (ref. Rev. 17:15). Christ comes in and He separates us from the darkness! He brings true light into our souls.*
 - (v.7)—in "earthen vessels." We are weak so that HE will be presented in His perfect strength.
- **Trials and hopes—Living by God's grace daily, as we face our trials (v.8-15)**
 - (v.8,9)—not overwhelmed by the trials, but rather, sustained by God himself.

- (v.10-12)-always facing death threats and sufferings as Christ had once suffered and died for us. **Christ suffered these very kinds of things. We therefore, can make it through whatever may come in this world** (1 Peter 3:17,18).
- (v.13-15)—Christ will raise us up and give us life, as we choose to be faithful to Him.
- **Outward sufferings but inward renewal through Christ (v.16-18)**
 - (v.17) “...our light affliction...” —**the refining fire of trials and hardships which will produce characteristics more valuable than gold in each of us.** (The Lord desires for our souls to be purified and refined—Malachi 3:2,3). “...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall...” (**Romans 8:18,19**).
 - (v.18) **We are to keep our gaze heavenward—looking to those things which are eternal...**not just the temporal things. (we need to have spiritual eyesight!)

Question (s) for the Heart:

Would you like to keep your eyes on Jesus Christ through whatever trial may enter your life? _____ (to have His grace, faith, hope, and peace?)